

WREXHAM  
MISSION  
AREA



ARDAL  
GENHADAETH  
WRECSAM

**ST JAMES' CHURCH RHOSDDU**  
**ST JOHN'S CHURCH RHOSNESNI**

***Ash Wednesday***  
*for all the church family at home*



Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, the period when we prepare for Easter by thinking about where we are with God, and saying sorry for the ways we have not quite got things right with him. In the Old Testament, people would often show how sorry they were by tearing their clothes and putting ash on their heads, eg Esther 4:1; Job 42:6. In the Christian Church, it became the custom to use the first day of Lent as a time to focus on saying sorry to God, and to put ash on people's heads as an external sign of their turning away from sin and turning back to God.

The following words and actions are to help you to mark this day.

Before you begin, you will need to gather the following items:

- some paper and a pen
- something to burn the paper in outside, such as a metal baking tin or a barbecue
- matches or a lighter
- some vegetable oil (preferably olive oil) - optional
- a bucket or other container full of water, in case you need to put out the flames quickly

*Where the text appears in red it is telling you what to do next*

Where the text appears in black one person reads aloud on behalf of everyone

**Where the text appears in bold black everyone joins in together**

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*Everyone gathers together and spends a moment in silence*

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

*A brief period of silence is kept before the prayer for the day, the Collect, is prayed:*

Holy God,

our lives are laid open before you:

rescue us from the chaos of sin

and through the death of your Son

bring us healing and make us whole

in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*We keep a period of silent reflection on our sins, those things we have not got right in our lives, and write them or draw them on the paper.*

*If not already outside, everyone moves outdoors, and each person places their paper in the metal vessel. A responsible adult carefully sets fire to them.*

*Everyone says together*

**O God, our gracious Father,  
we confess that we have sinned against you  
and done many things to grieve you.  
We have often been selfish,  
we have sometimes forgotten to pray to you,  
and we have not loved you as we should.  
For these and all other sins forgive us, we pray,  
through him who died for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*(C S Woodward, adapted from The Children's Service (SPCK))*

*You may then like to 'ash' each other (or yourself if you are alone). Either sprinkle dry ashes over your heads, or mix a little oil with the ashes to make a paste and make the sign of the cross on our own or each other's foreheads, saying,*

May these ashes be a sign of my/your sadness for disobeying God.

*After a moment of silence, everyone says together:*

**May the Lord enrich us with his grace,  
and nourish us with his blessing;  
the Lord defend us in trouble and keep us from all evil;  
the Lord accept our prayers,  
and absolve us from our offences,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.**

*Read these verses, claiming the promise in verse 3:*

- <sup>1</sup> The Lord God has put his Spirit in me.  
This is because he has appointed me to tell the good news  
to the poor.  
He has sent me to comfort those whose hearts are broken.  
He has sent me to tell the captives they are free.  
He has sent me to tell the prisoners that they are released.

- <sup>2</sup> He has sent me to announce the time when the Lord  
will show his kindness  
and the time when our God will punish evil people.  
He has sent me to comfort all those who are sad.
- <sup>3</sup> He has sent me to the sorrowing people of Jerusalem.  
I will give them a crown to replace their ashes.  
I will give them the oil of gladness to replace their sorrow.  
I will give them clothes of praise to replace their spirit of sadness.  
Then they will be called Tress of Goodness.  
They will be like trees planted by the Lord  
and will show his greatness.

*(Isaiah 61:1-3; ICB (Anglicised Edition))*

*Everyone prays together:*

**God of compassion,  
through your Son Jesus Christ  
you have reconciled your people to yourself.  
As we follow his example of prayer and fasting,  
may we obey you with willing hearts  
and serve one another in holy love;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*New Patterns for Worship (2002),  
and Common Worship: Times and Seasons (2006), material from which is  
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